

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor with some observations about Iraq, but I must comment on the presentation I just heard from my friend from Georgia.

You know, Mr. Speaker, independent observers agree that Democrats have moved quickly and aggressively to implement what we said we were going to do in the first 100 hours. I find it disingenuous that our friend was talking about somehow the Democrats not dealing with its commitment on earmarks, and mentioning the rain forest in Iowa. Mr. Speaker, again, independent observers agree that Mr. Obey and Mr. Byrd did bring forward a clean continuing resolution that didn't have any new earmarks. It killed the earmarks that had been set aside in the failed budget of the Republicans in the last session of Congress.

What my friend is talking about, the rain forest in Iowa, was an earmark from several years ago, a Republican earmark, I might say, from several years ago. And now he is suggesting that as we have moved forward to clean up the budget mess left by the Republicans, failing to meet their commitments to produce budgets in a timely fashion, that we didn't go back and surgically remove earmarks that they had scattered throughout the budget for years. Well, I'm sorry. With all due respect to George Orwell and my friend from Georgia, I think that is doublespeak. We did what we said we were going to do. The CR has come forward without earmarks, and we have put in place a much more transparent process so people will know who is doing what on whose behalf.

But, Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor today to make a few comments about the situation in Iraq. There is much ado in the other body to work to catch up with the reality on the ground in Iraq and where the American public is. This is not the time just to oppose escalation of more troops in Iraq. We find that the 21,000 that the President referred to is actually going to mean 50 additional thousand when you put all the support in. It is time for Congress to deal in a comprehensive fashion with what we need to do to make the best of this tragically mismanaged situation, a war of choice that we didn't have to do, sadly mismanaged by the administration. It is time for Congress to rediscover our war powers with Iraq, and even more important, the saber rattling that is directed now towards Iran. It is time for us to rediscover the power of the purse, not provide an open-ended bank account, but tighten down the resources that are provided by Congress to the administration, and to rediscover oversight where there are daily reminders in every major newspaper of where Congress in the last few years has frankly been missing in action.

To be able to advance those goals in a comprehensive fashion, I have introduced new

directions for Iraq. It sets forth goals for United States policy, supporting the Iraqi people, preventing greater violence, reestablish our international credibility and military readiness, and focusing on real national security threats. It calls not for escalation, but prohibiting the escalation without specific congressional approval, and for the redeployment of troops from Iraq to be completed in approximately 1 year.

It calls for the United States to forswear the establishment of permanent bases in Iraq, as well as U.S. control over Iraq's oil infrastructure and economic policies. It redirects United States reconstruction funding from large foreign contractors to Iraqi-owned businesses to help create jobs in Iraq. It instructs the President to nullify contracts where any company has not fulfilled an Iraq reconstruction contract, and to recover lost funds.

We ought not to just stop the fraud in terms of the contracting, but we ought to aggressively punish war profiteering, encouraging Congress to investigate and the Attorney General to aggressively prosecute profiteering and fraud.

It requires a regional diplomatic initiative because ultimately it is going to require diplomacy on the part of the United States and all of the surrounding countries to be able to turn this around.

I strongly urge my colleagues to look at the New Direction For Iraq Act of 2007 as a comprehensive way to change the situation in Iraq.